



Strengthening EPR capacities in Central America through DFID funds





Guatemala:
ICT &
emergencies
training

Latin America & the Caribbean and DFID: 2014-2015 at a glance

STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CAPACITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA WITH WFP AND UNICEF

Timely and effective response is vital to save lives during emergencies. In 2014, the Department for International Development (DFID) invested £10 million to enhance emergency preparedness and response (EPR) capacities across the world to respond within the first 72 hours after a disaster strikes. The project entitled "Strengthening Humanitarian Preparedness in High Risk Countries," empowered the UN Child's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to support governments and communities in reinforcing their emergency response capacities. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, WFP and UNICEF implement this initiative in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. These four countries face high exposure to extreme recurrent events such as floods, hurricanes and droughts.

The **primary goals** of the DFID project are:

1. To improve the capacities of WFP and UNICEF to launch an appropriate and effective humanitarian response, **within the first 72 hours after an emergency**
2. To strengthen the emergency response of the humanitarian network, including key local and national counterparts, **within the first 72 hours after an emergency**

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

UNICEF; National Disaster Management Administrations (NDMAs) of the four Central American countries; United Nations Emergency Technical Teams (UNETT); Regional Risk, Emergency and Disaster Task Force in Latin America and the Caribbean (RedLAC)



I. Country accomplishments

The following are examples of selected activities in the recipient countries:

El Salvador: Expanding Cash and Vouchers (C&V)

C&V provides a mechanism for a rapid surge in WFP's emergency response capacities. With DFID funding, the El Salvador Country Office worked in 140 of the country's most vulnerable municipalities to identify potential commercial distribution mechanisms for cash and voucher exchanges. As a result, WFP now has a verified list of potential food providers, so that WFP can call upon these suppliers during an emergency response.

Guatemala:

Telecommunications Training

During emergencies, the ability to communicate is of utmost importance, especially if telephone and internet lines are down. DFID funds were key in strengthening emergency telecommunications capacities. In September 2014, the Regional Bureau carried out trainings on the use of telecommunications equipment and services for emergencies in Guatemala. Participants learned how to use radios, GPS and voice and data satellite communications. Participants also reviewed with Guatemala's National Coordination for Disaster Reduction Agency (CONRED) to learn about their emergency operations and identified areas where WFP and CONRED can better support each other in emergency situations.

Honduras: Certification in Risk Management

Honduras was one of the most affected countries by weather-related events between 1993-2012, according to Germanwatch. In light of Honduras' vulnerability to natural disasters, the National Autonomous University of Honduras, the Earth

and Sciences Studies Institute and the World Food Programme developed an academic programme in Disaster Risk Management. These courses received funding support from DFID and are aimed at developing response mechanisms, combining theoretical learning with field practice in seven main topic areas, including: geological events; meteorological events; drought, erosion and desertification; flooding; air, water and soil pollution; forest fires and food security.

Nicaragua: Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) in vulnerable areas

WFP and Nicaragua's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Relief (SINAPRED) carried out an LCA in Waspam, which is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the country. The objective of this LCA was to collect primary information on community habits, livelihoods, and available infrastructure in order to better understand the situation in the region and tailor EPR activities accordingly. WFP visited locations for food storage, interviewed owners of storage facilities and officials from over-land and aquatic transportation companies. With this information, WFP was able to evaluate, analyse, select and register strategic locations for emergency situations. The government, WFP and other humanitarian partners are now better positioned to reduce risks and strengthen preparedness and response operations linked to food security.



Guatemala: British Representative receiving recognition for DFID's support

II. Inter-agency collaboration

Equip Emergency Situation Rooms

El Salvador

WFP's El Salvador office developed an inter-agency situation room for the country's humanitarian actors to monitor potential disasters before they strike, to timely plan for effective responses and to support the government with a highly experienced team of experts during the first 72 hours after an emergency. The Situation Room is equipped with radios and seven flat-screen televisions that display the latest news on disasters and weather data from El Salvador's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) 's Environmental Observatory as well as from news services. UNETT members and the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) can access the Situation Room during emergency situations.



El Salvador: Newly equipped Emergency Situation Room used by inter-agency team

Guatemala

In 2015, WFP Guatemala inaugurated an inter-agency mobile Situation Room to support the humanitarian teams during emergency response efforts. This mobile unit is equipped with tents, computers, radios, emergency travel kits, a generator, solar panels and ICT equipment, ready to be assembled and organized into a situation room at any time and place. The mobile situation room is accessible by all of UNETT and key government counterparts, serving as a vital tool for emergency monitoring and response planning.

El Salvador: Emergency Tool Kit

Easy access to information and emergency protocols is vital during the first 72 hours after a disaster hits. At the request of El Salvador's NDMA, WFP and UNICEF developed an emergency

tool kit. This is a selection of key documents that includes norms, protocols and a "what to do" guide in case of volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes, and other emergencies. The tool kit was given to leaders responsible for emergency preparation and response activities at the municipal and departmental government levels, so that they can rapidly follow emergency protocols after a disaster strikes. The Tool Kit was presented by the Salvadorian NDMA at the inauguration of the Situation Room in April 2015.

Nicaragua: Interagency Simulation Exercise

Simulation exercises allow officials and community members to test their emergency response mechanisms and improve their coordination strategies. In late 2014, WFP, UNICEF and OCHA ran a hurricane simulation exercise in Bluefields to improve coordination between humanitarian actors in a remote and disaster-prone area of the country. Participants from UNETT, the Nicaraguan NDMA, and humanitarian organizations, took part of exercise - with RedLac providing technical assistance. This hurricane simulation helped to strengthen connectivity and cooperation among the various participating organizations.



Nicaragua: Emergency simulation exercise with the Civil Protection and the humanitarian network in Bluefields

IV. SPOTLIGHT: C&V Activities in the Central America region

WFP has recently started to diversify its emergency response modalities in the region. In addition to food distributions during emergencies, WFP is increasingly looking to cash and voucher (C&V) transfers for a quick and effective response. C&V is allowing WFP to come closer to responding within the first 72 hours after an emergency.

With generally well-functioning markets and frequent service providers, Latin American operations generally favour the use of C&V. DFID supported the Regional Bureau's C&V Unit in building internal Country Office capacities for emergency response. This capacity building has been key to expanding the CO readiness for C&V responses.

With DFID funding, WFP extended lessons learned from a C&V emergency response in Paraguay to Central America. Additional tools were developed, including market studies and supply chain studies, as well as guidelines on how to launch an emergency response within the first 72 hours after a disaster. The work in Central America was done in coordination with partners and local and national governments.



El Salvador: Drought –affected woman using her voucher at the supermarket



Honduras: Drought-affected beneficiaries receiving cash from the bank

In mid 2015, two major situations threaten food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in Central America: the drought, which has affected the Dry Corridor since mid-2014, and the coffee rust, which has devastated coffee plantations throughout the region. WFP has responded to both of these emergencies in through C&V .

During 2015, there has been a scale-up of C&V operations in the region, particularly in El Salvador, Guatemala

and Honduras. With additional funding for 2016-2017, WFP hopes to further refine C&V 72-hours through response times and assuring that more government officials are trained in the use of C&V.

V. Innovative Products

Emergency assessments: A 72-hr Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) was developed to analyse the food security situation immediately after a shock. The tool uses secondary data pre and post crisis as well as interviews and occasionally field visits. The EFSA 72-hr identifies the urgent food and non-food needs and compiles information on nutrition, cash and voucher usage, and food security.

Manual for Nutrition in Emergencies: This was developed to ensure that nutrition security is integrated into the emergency operation implementation and in preparedness activities. It contains protocols with minimum preparedness measures, highlights the nutritional needs of vulnerable groups and explains how to determine the appropriate response mechanism for varying degrees of under nutrition.

ICT Emergency equipment: ICT equipment was pre-positioned in all four WFP Central American country offices and at the Panama Regional Bureau to ensure staff preparedness in telecommunications during the first 72 hours after an emergency. Country Offices received an Emergency Management Kits (EMK), containing necessary tools to be able to continue supporting an emergency operation from remote areas when telecommunication systems collapses.

High Energy Biscuits (HEBs) prepositioned in El Salvador: 18 metric tonnes have been pre-positioned in El Salvador for use in the four countries in case of sudden-onset emergencies.

These products are replicable throughout Latin America and therefore will benefit the region as a whole



Honduras: inter-agency simulation exercise



Guatemala: Mobile emergency center

Looking ahead to DFID II

In 2015–2016, DFID II funds will include WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and OCHA. These funds will continue to focus on the CA4 (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua), as well as on the Caribbean with particular attention for Haiti.

